

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1598 without my signature.

At the very heart of the initiative process is the 1st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the core value of political speech. Any burden placed on either of these fundamental rights of Californians must be examined through a lens that favors the right of the people to address grievances with the government through initiatives, referendums, and recalls.

The purported goal of this bill is to provide potential petition signers more information about the measure, including whether the circulator is paid or volunteer and who the major contributors are. Unfortunately, under this bill, petitions circulated by paid circulators would have to be continually updated and reprinted to reflect any changes in the top five donors backing the measure. As a result, it would be more expensive and onerous to qualify initiatives for the ballot, and the ability for the smaller, grassroots-oriented organizations to participate in the process would be limited.

As with similar measures I have vetoed in the past, this bill attacks the initiative process and makes it more difficult for the people of California to gather signatures and qualify measures for the ballot. While making the process more cumbersome and more costly may be for those hostile to the initiative process, it is not for reform-minded Californians.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger